



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

## FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Susan.Gerhart@noaa.gov  
727/824-5305, FAX 727/824-5308

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 2, 2008  
FB08-001

## Proposed Changes to the Start of Trip Limits for the Atlantic Spanish Mackerel Fishery off the East Coast of Florida

On January 3, 2008, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries Service) will begin accepting public comment on a proposed change to the beginning date for trip limits in the Atlantic Spanish mackerel fishery off the east coast of Florida. In summary, NOAA Fisheries Services proposes to begin the 3,500-pound trip limit on March 1 each year to correspond to the beginning of the fishing year.

### Background

The fishery for the Atlantic group of Spanish mackerel is divided into northern and southern zones. The southern zone extends south along the east coast of Florida from the Georgia/Florida border to the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line. The majority of the Atlantic group Spanish mackerel commercial fishery is prosecuted in the southern zone; during the 2006-2007 fishing season, 87 percent of commercial landings were from the southern zone.

Amendment 15 to the FMP changed the fishing season for Atlantic group king and Spanish mackerel from April 1-March 31 to March 1-end of February. This change was implemented to ensure the commercial mackerel fisheries are open during March when several other fisheries are closed. For example, the red porgy fishery is closed January through April, and the gag and black grouper fisheries are closed in March and April.

Although the fishing year was changed in Amendment 15, the start date for the trip limit in the southern zone was not similarly changed to coincide with the new fishing year. The existing trip limit allows for 3,500 pounds per vessel per day April 1-November 30, and from December 1 until the end of the fishing year trip limits are adjusted based on the percent of the quota landed. Because the fishing year begins March 1, there is currently no designated trip limit for the first month of the fishing year.

### Dates and Addresses

Written comments on these proposed changes must be received no later than 5 p.m., Eastern Time, January 18, 2008. You may submit comments, identified by 0648-AV17, by any one of the following methods:

- Electronic Submissions: Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal eRulemaking Portal at

<http://www.regulations.gov>

- Fax: 727-824-5308, Attn: Susan Gerhart
- Mail: Susan Gerhart, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701.

Instructions: All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. All Personal Identifying Information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NOAA Fisheries Service will accept anonymous comments. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

Comments received by January 18, 2008, will be considered by NOAA Fisheries Service in its decision to approve, disapprove, or partially approve the actions. Comments received after that date will not be considered by NOAA Fisheries Service in this decision. All comments received by NOAA Fisheries Service will be addressed in the final rule.

The proposed rule is also available via the Internet at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>. Printed or electronic copies of the proposed rule and regulatory amendment can be obtained from the Southeast Regional Office by contacting Susan Gerhart (see address above).

### How Can We Improve These Fishery Bulletins?

If you have any suggestions on how we may improve future fishery bulletins please contact:

Kim Amendola, Communication Specialist

Phone: 727-551-5707 FAX: 727-824-5320

E-mail: [SERO.Communications.Comments@noaa.gov](mailto:SERO.Communications.Comments@noaa.gov)

If you would like to receive these fishery bulletins via e-mail as soon as they are published, please e-mail us at the address below. You will still receive a print copy of these bulletins through the mail. E-mail [SERO.Communications.Comments@noaa.gov](mailto:SERO.Communications.Comments@noaa.gov) and include: (1) "Request for Electronic Fishery Bulletins" in the subject line; and (2) Your preferred email address in the body of the email.